

Analysis of Kia Ora Hauora historic data

Kia Ora Hauora

Paenga-whāwhā 2025



Kia Ora **Hauora**

Supporting Māori into Health



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Key findings

Overview

Examining Kia Ora Hauora's historic data on Māori students registered with the programme who expressed interest in studying physiotherapy reveals significant insights concerning the demographics, progress, and engagement of these students. This report, prepared by Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL) in partnership with the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand (PBNZ) and Kia Ora Hauora, aims to assess the impact of Kia Ora Hauora on increasing the number of Māori physiotherapists and supporting their educational and career journeys.

Demographics of Registered Taura

- Registration trends: since its inception in 2010, Kia Ora Hauora has registered 1,338 Māori interested in physiotherapy. The number of registrations peaked at 158 in 2019 but declined to 54 in 2023, which was likely due to the impact of COVID-19
- Gender distribution: the majority of registered students (69 percent) are female, reflecting the high female representation in the physiotherapy profession (70 percent female in 2024).
- Age distribution: most registered students (85 percent of females and 86 percent of males) were 23 years or younger at the time of registration, with the average age being 19. This reflects the aim of Kia Ora Hauora to target secondary school students to support their educational journey towards and through tertiary studies
- Regional distribution: registrations across the four Te Whatu Ora regions are predominantly from Te Taitokerau (33 percent), followed by Te Manawa Taki (28 percent), Te Waipounamu (22 percent), and Te Ikaroa (17 percent).

Progress Towards Achievement

- Tertiary education: of the 1,338 registered students, 704 (53 percent) were recorded as attending tertiary education. Among these, 257 (37 percent) studied physiotherapy, although this could be as high as 330 if we assume a similar number of those with no recorded field of study studied physiotherapy.
- Completion rates: approximately 100 students (39 percent of those studying physiotherapy) completed their tertiary education. If we assume a similar completion rate to the overall rate for

Māori students (supplied by the Ministry of Education (MoE)), this number could be as high as 230

- Employment: around 160 students (15 percent) had recorded employment, with 56 (36 percent) employed as physiotherapists. Although this number could be as high as 186 based on our assumptions. This suggests that Kia Ora Hauora may have contributed between 17 percent to 58 percent of the current Māori physiotherapists (320 as of 2023).

Kia Ora Hauora Engagement

- Engagement levels: on average, each registered student received 14 engagements with Kia Ora Hauora, with the median number being 11. The engagements were categorised by BERL into administration based, support, and specific engagements.
- Themes of engagement: the main themes included general engagement and follow-up with 20 percent of the total share of engagements, health pathways (16 percent), and scholarships and funding (14 percent). For those studying physiotherapy, scholarships and funding engagements increased to 17 percent, and for those who completed their physiotherapy studies, scholarships and funding engagements increased to 20 percent.

Conclusion

The Kia Ora Hauora programme has played an important role in supporting Māori students in their journey to becoming physiotherapists. The data indicates that Kia Ora Hauora has substantially contributed to the increase in Māori physiotherapists, with a considerable proportion of current Māori physiotherapists likely to have utilised the programme. From our analysis, we can infer that it is likely that the engagement and support provided by Kia Ora Hauora has been instrumental in helping these students achieve their educational and career goals.

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1 Introduction

BERL, in partnership with the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand and Kia Ora Hauora, was engaged to undertake the analysis of physiotherapy data held by Kia Ora Hauora, in order to assist them with answering some key questions around the impact Kia Ora Hauora has had since it started operating in 2010.

The key function of Kia Ora Hauora since its inception is to nurture and leverage strategic relationships across the health and education sectors. The aim is to build partnerships that help remove barriers for Māori success and increase the number of Māori working in the health sector. As the only by Māori for Māori health workforce development programme, Kia Ora Hauora weaves tikanga into all of its activities and supports tauira achieve from secondary school through to tertiary study and into the workforce.

From 2010 until 2018, Kia Ora Hauora contract was solely focussed on the transition of students to tertiary study, and once tauira graduated they effectively exited the Kia Ora Hauora programme. In 2018, working with students to transition from tertiary studies to employment was introduced into Kia Ora Hauora's contract, and further data on tauira transitioning to employment has been gathered that was missing in the earlier part of the programme.

This report describes the overall demographics of registered tauira interested in physiotherapy, by year of their registration with Kia Ora Hauora, and their progress from secondary school through to tertiary studies and the workforce. In addition, this report examines how the engagement with Kia Ora Hauora potentially assisted tauira in achieving their study goals. In conclusion, this report examines the trends in Māori pursuing physiotherapy studies since 2010, the growth of the Māori physiotherapy workforce, and Kia Ora Hauora's role within this change.

1.1 Approach

The research questions this project is seeking to answer for Kia Ora Hauora include:

- Has Kia Ora Hauora helped to increase the number of Māori physiotherapists over the programme's lifetime?
- Does the Kia Ora Hauora programme make a difference to its registered students?

BERL's approach to answering these questions within this project is to review and analyse the bespoke dataset held by Kia Ora Hauora. This dataset encompasses information from the Kia Ora Hauora programme covering its physiotherapist students and contains the following data variables:

- Demographic details (including the age, gender, and location) of Māori students registering their interest with Kia Ora Hauora
- Interest in being mentored or in being a mentor
- Longitudinal data on the progress of students from secondary school to tertiary study, and then progress through year one and year two of tertiary study
- Engagement of students with scholarships, work placements, and career workshops.

From this dataset, BERL analysed the annual number of new registered students, in terms of progress rates, as these students work towards completing their physiotherapy qualification.

Alongside this data, BERL investigated relevant Ministry of Education and Physiotherapy Board data to ascertain if there was a discernible trend within Kia Ora Hauora datasets of increasing numbers of Māori physiotherapists which could be attributed to Kia Ora Hauora.

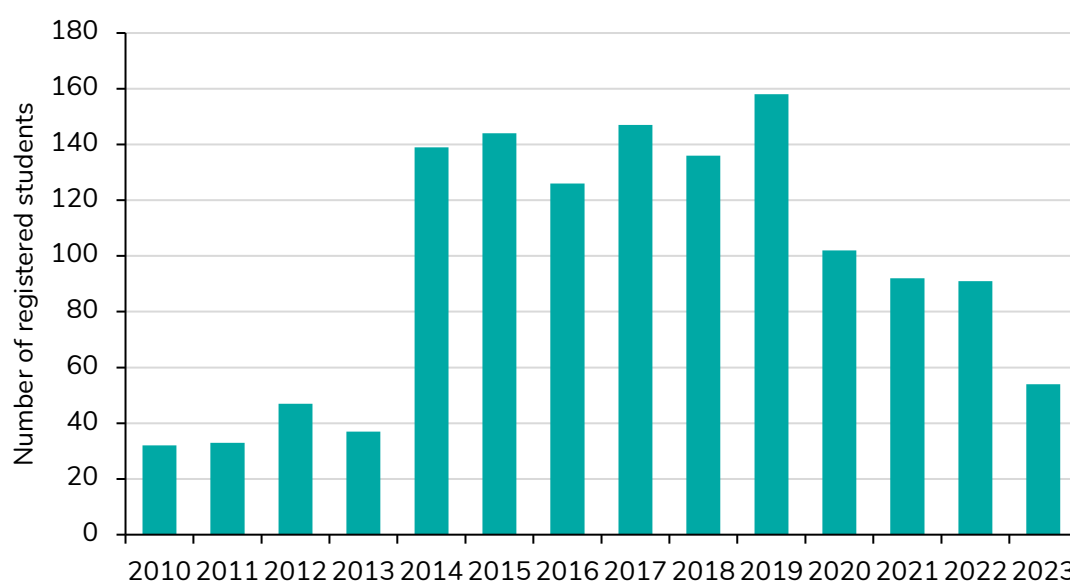
To establish whether the programme is making a difference to the students, BERL analysed the engagement levels of the students, their progress from initial interest to graduation, and their mentorship status (whether they are being mentored).

2 Demographics of registered taurira

When the Kia Ora Hauora programme commenced in 2010, 32 Māori participants with an interest in physiotherapy registered. As shown in Figure 1, it took around five years for the Kia Ora Hauora programme to gain momentum and see a significant increase in its registered numbers. From 2010 through to 2013, the programme averaged around 37 registered individuals, before jumping to around 140 in 2014. The number of Māori interested in physiotherapy continued to increase, to a peak of 158 in 2019, before a drop in students registered between 2020 and 2023. In 2023 there were just 54 Māori interested in physiotherapy registering with Kia Ora Hauora. It is likely that this decline was due to the impact of COVID-19 and especially the limitations on Kia Ora Hauora's ability to connect with students interested in physiotherapy.

In total Kia Ora Hauora, between 2010 and 2023, has seen 1,338 Māori interested in studying physiotherapy register with the programme.

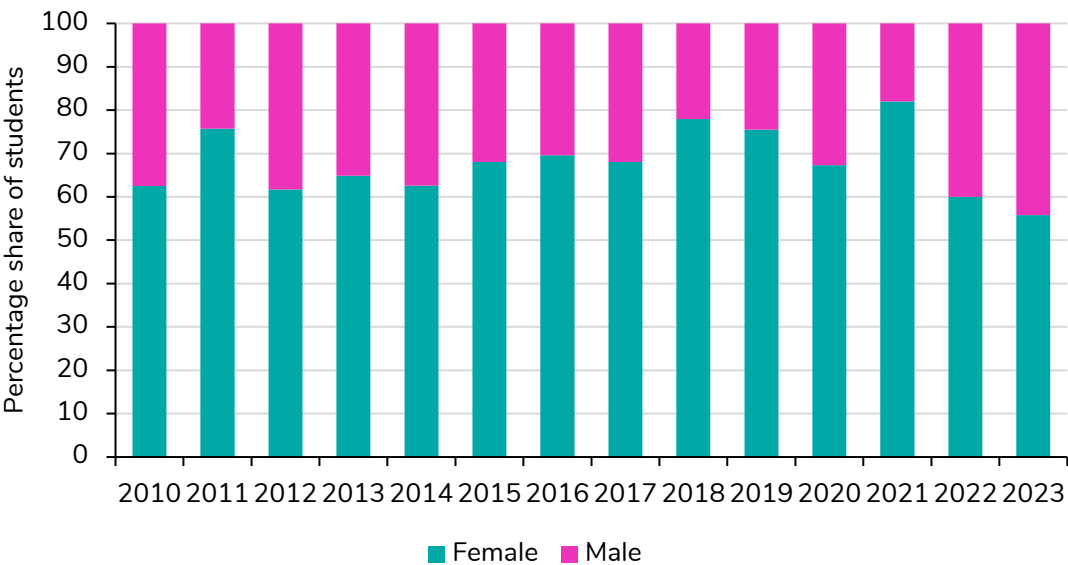
Figure 1 Number of students registered with Kia Ora Hauora by year of registration



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

Overall, across 2010 to 2023, the majority (69 percent) of registered students were female, with 31 percent being male. This has been fairly consistent across each year, with the percentage share of females ranging from a low of 55 percent in 2023 through to a high of 81 percent in 2021. The high percentage share of female students interested in physiotherapy is reflective of the high female representation in the profession, with 70 percent of Annual Practising Certificate (APC) holders being female in 2024.

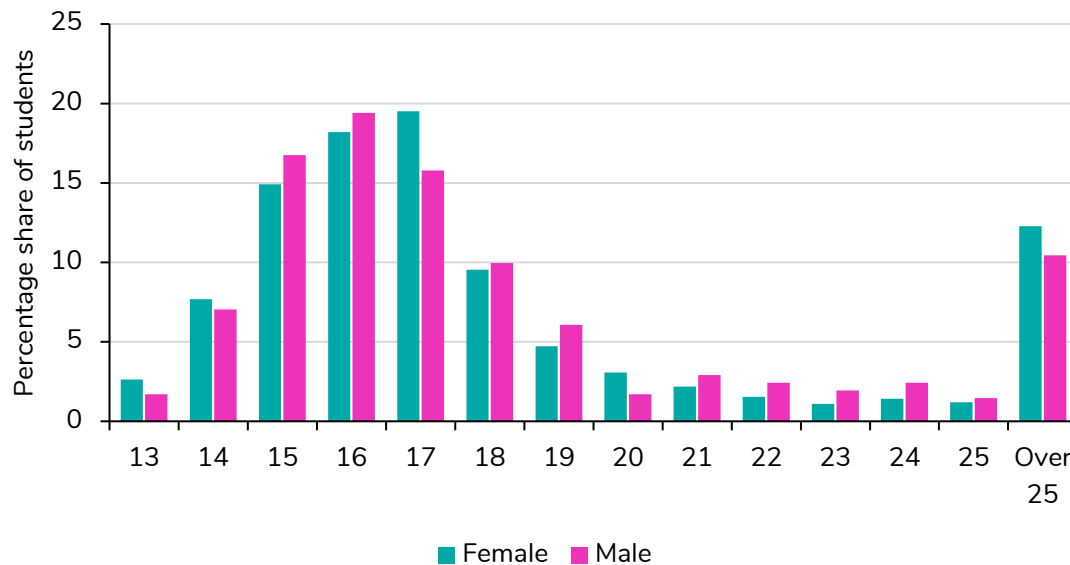
Figure 2 Percentage share of students registered with Kia Ora Hauora, by gender and year of registration



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

The age at registration for females ranged from 13 through to 64, with the average age being 19 and the median age being 17. In addition, 85 percent of all students registered were 23 years or younger at the date of their registration. For males these age variations were very similar, with students' ages ranging from 13 through to 67 at time of registration, with the average age being 19 and the median age being 17. In addition, 86 percent of all students registered were 23 years or younger at the date of their registration.

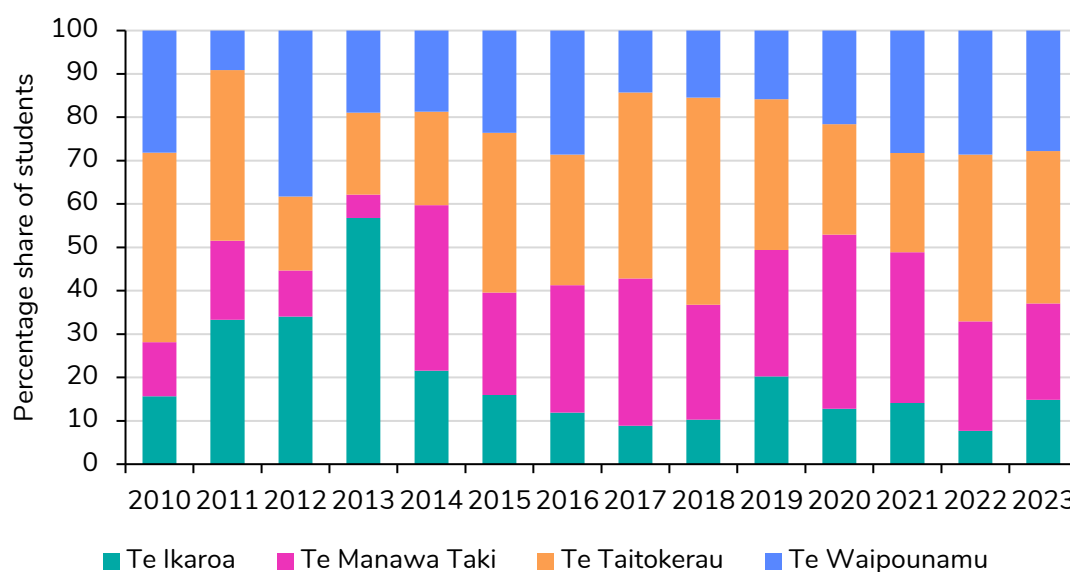
Figure 3 Percentage share of students registered by gender and age, 2010 to 2023



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

Overall, the age breakdown reiterates that the focus of Kia Ora Hauora on young Māori under 25 is correct. Lastly, we can examine where Māori registering with Kia Ora Hauora are living at the time of registration. Across the period 2010 to 2023, using Te Whatu Ora regions, 33 percent were from Te Taitokerau (Northern), 28 percent from Te Manawa Taki (Midland), 22 percent from Te Waipounamu (Southern), and the remaining 17 percent from Te Ikaroa (Central).

Figure 4 Percentage share of students registered by year of registration and Te Whatu Ora region



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

Interestingly, as shown in the figure, in the early years (2010 to 2013), when registration numbers were much lower (as shown in Figure 1), there were substantial differences in where the students were from, compared to later years (2014 to 2023). In these early years Te Ikaroa was one of the main sources of registrations, peaking in 2013, and while its share of students dropped dramatically in 2014 and beyond this was more from the substantial increases in registered students from other areas, then a decline in students from Te Ikaroa. In fact, student numbers from Te Ikaroa increased in 2014, and remained somewhat steady, before declining in 2020, along with other regions.

Across the other regions it can be seen that only Te Taitokerau has consistently been one of the main sources of registration across all the years, including 2010 to 2013 when there were few students registered. This is not surprising considering the size of the Māori population in Northland and Auckland, which comprise the Te Taikokerau region.

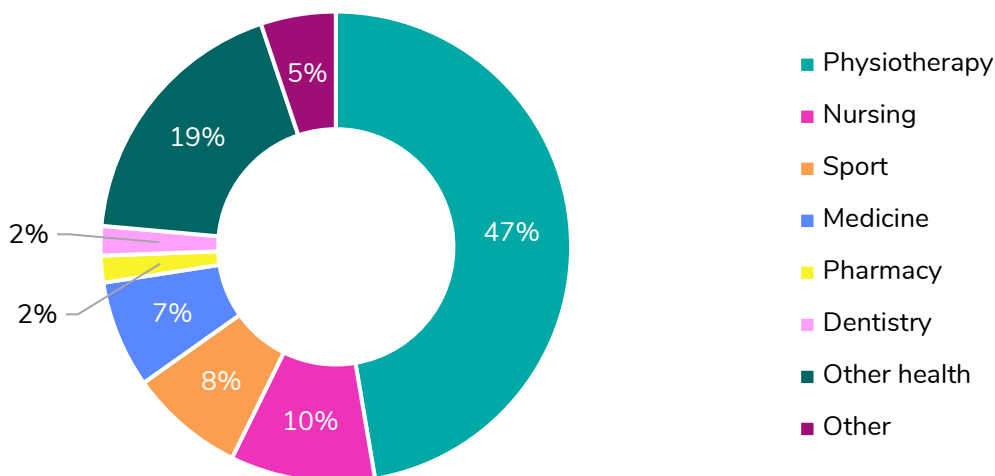
3 Progress towards achievement

In this section, BERL reviewed and analysed Kia Ora Hauora’s dataset to assess the progress registered students have made to begin tertiary studies, complete their tertiary studies, and obtain employment.

A start was made by examining the total number of registered students recorded as attending a tertiary provider. Of the 1,338 Māori registered with Kia Ora Hauora who were interested in studying to be physiotherapists around 700 students, approximately 53 percent, were recorded by Kia Ora Hauora as attending tertiary studies. Examining the subjects and courses being studied by the students reveals that of the 700 students around 550 students, or 80 percent, provided enough information to determine their likely course or subject matter. Of these students just 47 percent, or 260 students, studied physiotherapy with the remaining students studying health subjects such as nursing (10 percent), sports science (eight percent), medicine and surgery (seven percent), and other health subjects (22 percent). In addition, five percent of students studied non-health subjects.

If we assume that the 150 students who are undertaking tertiary studies, but have not provided the necessary information to allow their course or subjects to be identified, study physiotherapy at the same rate as other students (47 percent) then the number studying physiotherapy could be as high as 330.

Figure 5 Share of registered students by study topic, 2010 to 2023

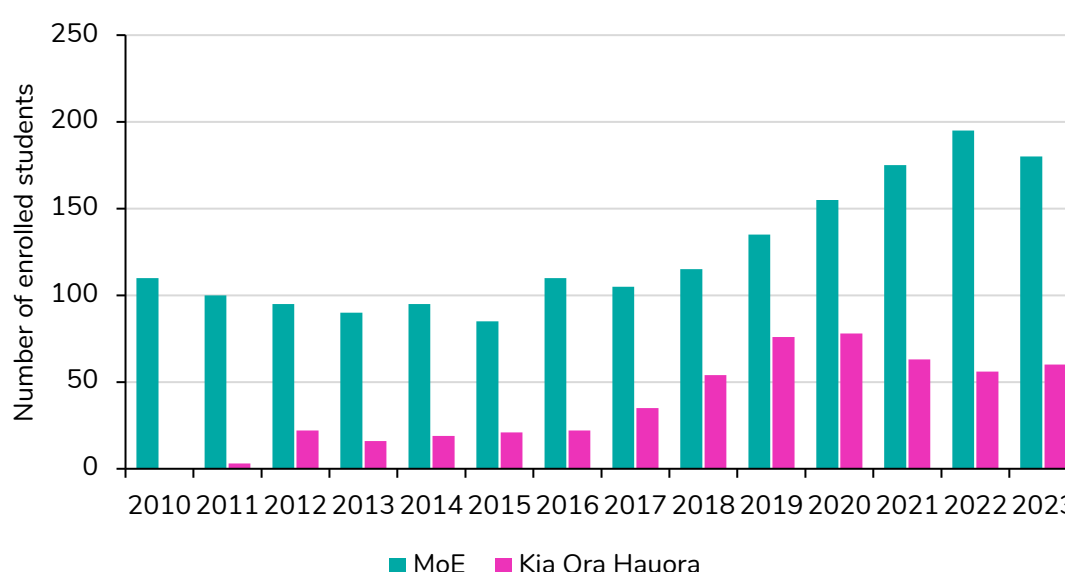


Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

Mapping this education data against the Ministry of Education's (MoE) participation data, showed that Kia Ora Hauora may have supported on average 33 percent of all Māori participants studying physiotherapy between 2012 and 2023, using the known number of students studying physiotherapy. As noted, if the actual number was 330, then around 40 percent of Māori participants studying physiotherapy would be affiliated with Kia Ora Hauora.

Across this period the number of Māori participants studying physiotherapy rose from 85 in 2015 through to 195 in 2022, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 Number of enrolled Māori physiotherapy students by year, MOE and Kia Ora Hauora



Source: BERL, MoE, and Kia Ora Hauora

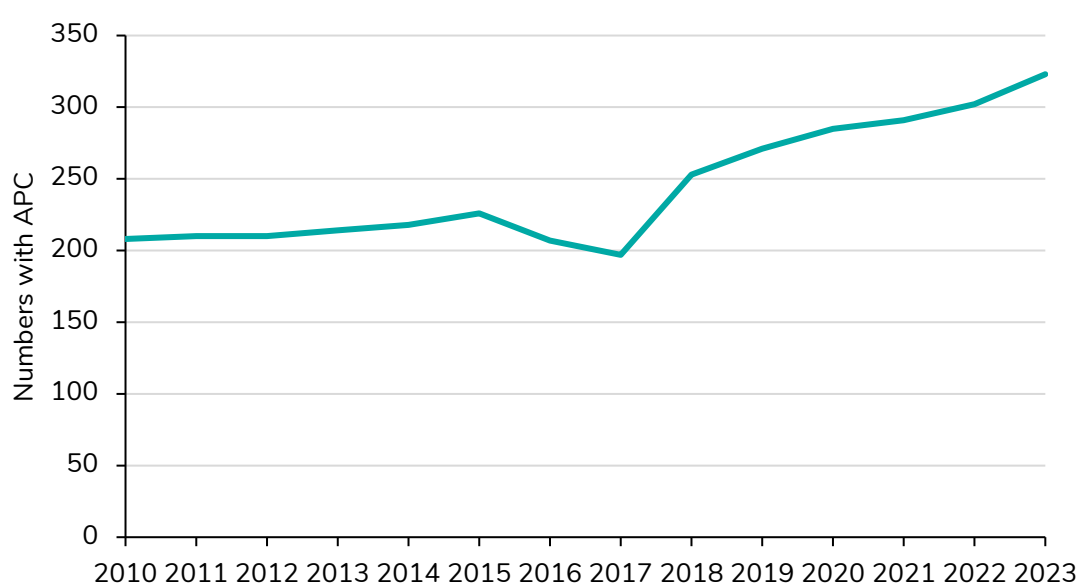
Overall around 210, or 30 percent, of those students who were recorded as undertaking tertiary studies are recorded as completing their final year of tertiary studies. If we split those studying physiotherapy, 260 students, then the completion rate was almost 40 percent, or 100 students. Given data from the Ministry of Education (MoE) which shows that across the same period the average completion rate for Māori studying physiotherapy was 70 percent, we can assume that the low level of completions in the Kia Ora Hauora database is potentially due to a loss of contact with the students. If we assume that students registered with Kia Ora Hauora completed their studies at the same rate as Māori students overall, then we can assume that around 180 students completed their tertiary studies. If the number studying was as high as 330 then up to 230 students may have completed, or will complete, their tertiary studies while being part of Kia Ora Hauora.

Finally, we can look at the number of students who obtained employment as physiotherapists. From the recorded data, from 2010 to 2023, around 160 or 15 percent of students had employment recorded. Of the students with recorded employment 58, or around 36 percent, were employed as physiotherapists, with a further 40 percent employed in health-related fields.

If we break down the employed students by those who studied physiotherapy, we have a total of 70 employed after studying physiotherapy. Of those 70 students, 56 (of the 58) students, or 80 percent, are employed as physiotherapists, while another eight are employed in health-related fields, and six are employed in other fields. If we assume a similar success rate across the estimated number of potential graduates (180 to 230) we can conclude that potentially around 140 to 186 students could have been employed as physiotherapists as a result of the Kia Ora Hauora programme.

We can conclude that of the around 320 Māori physiotherapists with an Annual Practising Certificate in 2023, at least 56 students (or 17 percent) had been registered with Kia Ora Hauora and were now employed as physiotherapists. This does not represent all the students who had registered with Kia Ora Hauora and the number could be much higher, we can assume 186 students (58 percent) maybe employed as physiotherapists, which would mean that a substantial proportion of current Māori physiotherapists made use of the Kia Ora Hauora programme while obtaining their qualification.

Figure 7 Annual numbers of Māori physiotherapists with an Annual Practising Certificate (APC)



Source: BERL and Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand

3.1 Progress towards achievement summary

Utilising all of the available data Table 1 shows that of the 1,338 students registered with Kia Ora Hauora between 2010 and 2023, just over 700 (or 53 percent) are recorded as attending tertiary education. And, of these 700, 260 (or 37 percent) are recorded as studying physiotherapy.

Finally, of these 260 students, 100 (or 39 percent) are recorded as completing their tertiary education, and of these 56 (or 56 percent) are recorded as being employed as physiotherapists. It should be noted that Kia Ora Hauora only started working with students to transition to employment in 2018 (when this transition was included in their contract), prior to this its relationship with students effectively ended at their graduation. This does mean prior to 2018 less is known about student's transition to employment.

Table 1 Progress of registered students in studying, completing their studies and finding a job, by year of registration

Year registered	Total registered	Studying at tertiary	Studying physiotherapy	Completed studies	Physiotherapy job
2010	32	28	10	5	1
2011	33	21	14	5	3
2012	47	23	7	2	2
2013	37	20	3	1	0
2014	139	76	19	9	6
2015	144	57	15	6	3
2016	126	53	11	4	4
2017	147	74	24	9	7
2018	136	76	37	15	11
2019	158	92	38	11	5
2020	102	67	21	8	2
2021	92	52	21	9	7
2022	91	45	24	14	4
2023	54	20	13	2	1
Total	1,338	704	257	100	56

Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

On the face of it, it could be argued that the success rate of Kia Ora Hauora was four percent, which is the percentage of the students registered with Kia Ora Hauora who become physiotherapists. Of course this number does not reflect the reality that many of the students registered with Kia Ora Hauora may not have finished secondary school, that as shown in Figure 5 only around 47 percent end up studying physiotherapy at tertiary level, or that a number may still be tertiary students.

If we restrict the success rate to the 257 students who we know studied physiotherapy, then the success rate of seeing registered students studying physiotherapy obtain a physiotherapy job rises to 22 percent. But maybe a better way of determining success, given that Kia Ora Hauora has only more recently being tasked with helping with the transition to employment, is to look at the number of students completing their physiotherapy studies, which would give a success rate of around 40 percent.

4 Kia Ora Hauora engagement

A key component of the Kia Ora Hauora programme is the engagement with Māori registered with the programme. This engagement enables Kia Ora Hauora to inform students of scholarship or grant funding opportunities, workshops and event opportunities, and pathways into, as well as progress through, health studies. This information is provided alongside general support and assistance as well as support in transition from study to employment. In this section we explore the engagement registered students have had with Kia Ora Hauora.

An initial analysis of the dataset shows that on average each registered student received 14 engagements with Kia Ora Hauora, with the median number of engagements per student being slightly lower at 11. As expected the minimum number of engagements recorded was one, while the maximum number recorded for one student was 77, which helps to explain why the average is higher than the median. Given that each student registered between 2010 and 2023 was active for a different length of time with Kia Ora Hauora, the number of engagements per student was adjusted to an annual measurement. Based on this adjustment the average length of time a student received engagement was 3.5 years, thus allowing us to determine that the average number of engagements per year for each student was four.

Overall, there were around 19,300 recorded engagements with students registered with Kia Ora Hauora between 2010 and 2023. To assist with understanding the key themes of these engagements¹, BERL reviewed all the engagements to identify the key themes from the suggested common themes.

The key themes identified were as follows:

- Support and assistance – engagements offering support, references, and information updates
- Health pathways – engagements related to students' planning around health science studies and careers
- Update and confirmations – engagements related to confirming students' details, study plans, and contact information

¹ BERL utilised our BERL owned version of Copilot

- Scholarships and funding - engagements related to providing information about scholarships and funding opportunities
- Workshops and events - engagements related to providing information on workshops, events, and other opportunities
- Transition to employment – engagements related to students transitioning from studying to employment
- General engagement and follow-ups – general and follow-up engagements with students
- Progress – engagements focused on students' progress with their studies
- Technical issues – engagements related to technical issues, including bounced emails, no answer phone calls, or any other technical issue.

These nine key themes can be grouped into three main groups, administration based engagements, support engagements, and specific engagements. How each theme fitted into each group is shown here:

Administration based engagements:

- General engagement and follow-up
- Technical issues
- Updates and confirmations.

Support engagements:

- Support and assistance
- Health pathways
- Progress.

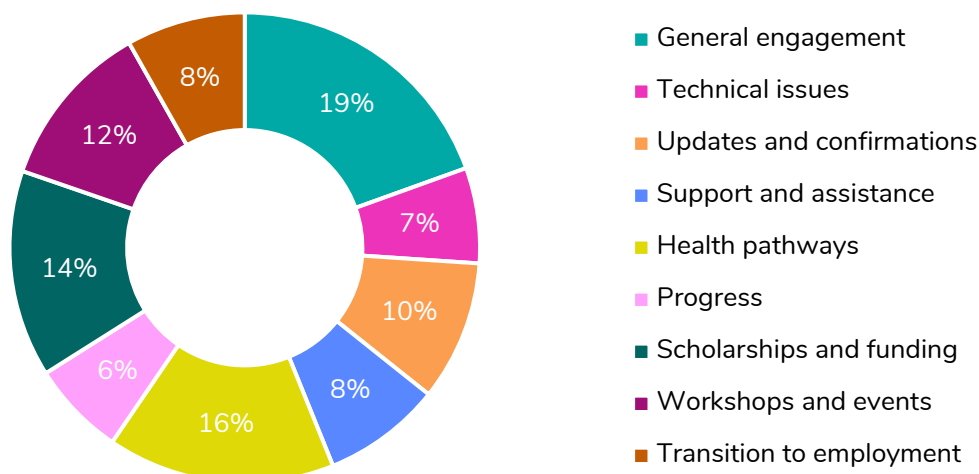
Specific engagements:

- Scholarships and funding
- Workshops and events
- Transition to employment.

Overall, across all students with Kia Ora Hauora who registered between 2010 and 2023, we observed an average of six administration engagements, an average of four support engagements,

and an average of five specific engagements. The main themes of engagement were general engagement and follow-up with 20 percent of total engagements, health pathway engagements with 16 percent, and scholarships and funding engagements with 14 percent.

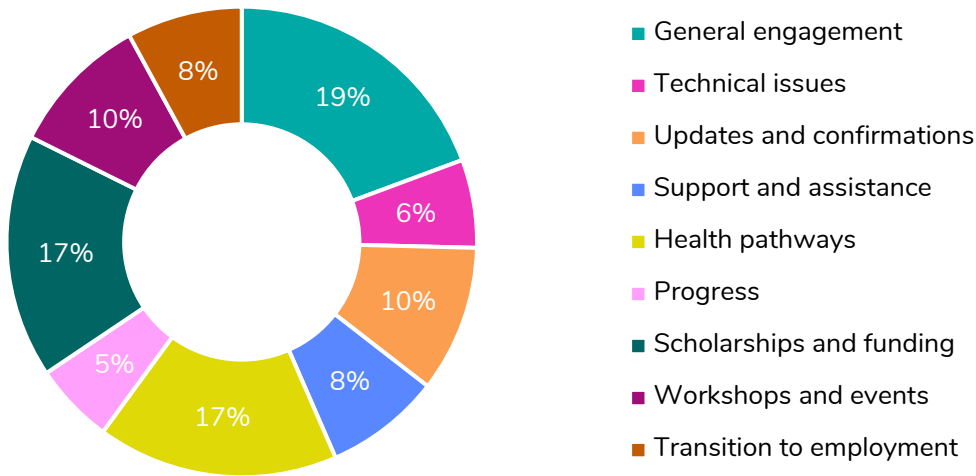
Figure 8 Share of engagements for all registered students, 2010 to 2023



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

When we restrict the overall group to just those who are currently studying physiotherapy, or studied physiotherapy previously, we get an average of eight administration engagements, an average of five support engagements, and an average of six specific engagements. The main themes of engagement were general engagement and follow-up with 19 percent of total engagements, scholarships and funding engagements with 17 percent, and health pathway engagements with 17 percent. The largest differences that can be seen here are the shares of engagement around scholarships and funding which has moved from 14 percent overall to 17 percent for this group, and the workshop and events engagements which has moved from 12 percent overall to 10 percent for this group.

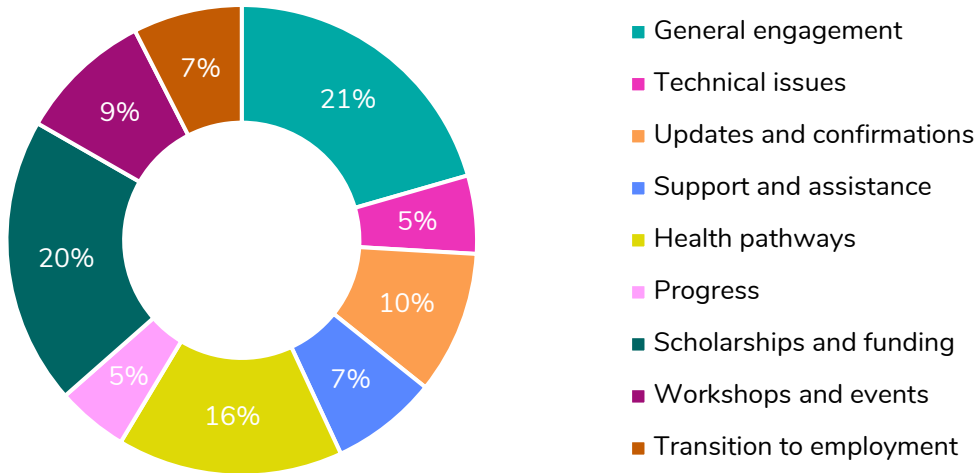
Figure 9 Share of engagements for registered students studying physiotherapy, 2010 to 2023



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

When further restricted to those studying physiotherapy who had completed their studies, we get an average of 10 administration engagements, an average of five support engagements, and an average of eight specific engagements. The main themes of engagement were general engagement and follow-up with 21 percent of total engagements, scholarships and funding engagements with 20 percent, and health pathway engagements with 16 percent. The largest differences that can be seen here are the shares of engagement around scholarships and funding which has moved from 14 percent overall to 20 percent for this group, and the workshop and events engagements which has moved from 12 percent overall to nine percent for this group.

Figure 10 Share of engagements for registered students who completed physiotherapy studies, 2010 to 2023



Source: BERL and Kia Ora Hauora

There appears to be at least a causal relationship between the average number of engagements with Kia Ora Hauora and the progress of students either studying or completing their physiotherapy studies. Further analysis shows that the major cause of this relationship is actually the number of years these students are active with Kia Ora Hauora compared to other registered students. We can see that the average years of engagement per student rises from 3.5 years for all students through to 5.3 years for those who completed their physiotherapy studies. By adjusting for the number of years spent receiving engagements, the average number of engagements per year was around 4.1 for the overall group and 4.3 for those who completed their physiotherapy studies. This shows that there is only a small difference, in terms of overall engagement, between Kia Ora Hauora registered students based on their study choices. This is not surprising given that while this research is focused on those interested in studying physiotherapy, Kia Ora Hauora aims to encourage and support more Māori into health careers.

Appendix A Methodology

For this research project Kia Ora Hauora provided four datasets covering students registered with an interest in physiotherapy, their education data, their engagements with Kia Ora Hauora, and their employment data. All data contained in the datasets was shared with Kia Ora Hauora by the registered students.

For this research project BERL undertook the following in relation to each of the datasets provided by Kia Ora Hauora:

Students

For this dataset, which contained gender, current age, date of registration with Kia Ora Hauora, and region, we did very little beyond estimating students' ages at the date of registration and turning the date of registration into a year of registration. The age at registration was calculated using their current age as of April 2025 and the date of registration provided.

The year of registration was then used, along with a unique reference number, to enable us to use year of registration across the other datasets.

Education

For this dataset, there was data on the year of educational activity, the year of either secondary school or tertiary study the student was undertaking, the course name, the major being undertaken, and if the year was their final year of tertiary study. For this dataset, BERL's main task was to use the information about course name and major to determine the most likely subject of study. This enabled us to identify which students were studying physiotherapy versus other health, or even non-health, subjects. The second task was ensuring the final year of tertiary study was consistent with year of study and other information provided. Both of these fields were used to estimate the number of students studying physiotherapy, and the number of students who had completed their studies.

Engagements

For this dataset, there was data on each engagement Kia Ora Hauora had with the student, including failed attempts to contact the student, the date of the engagement, and a description of the engagement. Given the number of engagements, BERL utilised an internal AI tool to help

determine the common themes of the engagements which were then reviewed to create a list of key themes. Once this was done, BERL could then undertake analysis of the engagement dataset.

Employment

The employment dataset contained the position of employment, the start date of the employment, and the number of entries recorded for each student. For this dataset, BERL needed to categorise the latest employment record for each student into one of three categories: physiotherapy, other health-related, and other. We could then identify the number of students either currently or last recorded as working as a physiotherapist, along with those working in another health-related field, and those working outside health-related employment.